**CHICK CARE Guide by Egg Well Farm**

**Supplies:**

* **Brooder box –** can be as simple as cardboard box petitions or wooden box.
* **Pine shaving –** should be larger shaving. They will eat the smaller ones and it will kill them. Put an inch of large pine shavings in the floor of the brooder box. Don’t get it too deep. Do Not use cedar shavings.

***Slick surfaces will cause spraddle leg***. 

* **Chick Starter Grower feed -** start by pouring a small amount on the floor on paper towel.
* **Heat lamp -** (preferably the infrared red heat lamps. White lights cause pecking)
* **Waterer** - placed on something to hold it up about an inch high to prevent drowning.
* **Feeders -** after the chicks have been eating from paper towel for about a week fill feeders with starter grower feed.

**Day 1: Acclimating Chicks**

* Warm the brooder to 90 degrees before adding chicks. Keep drafts away from chicks. Since they have not grown out their feathers yet, they catch colds easily. **Without feathers, they are basically naked.**
* Temperature: 90 degrees bring temperature up or down according to behavior. If your chicks are huddling together in clumps, they are cold, if they are plastered all around the walls trying to get away from the heat they are too hot. Drop the temperature down 5 degrees each week until reaching 70 degrees. **Caution!** Please don’t let your birds get any hotter than 90 degrees. Heat exhaustion will kill and is identified by gasping, and liquid will go out their mouths and butts. If the outdoors is 90 degrees, you may not have to use a heat source at all.
* Water: First thing to do when baby chicks arrive is to take one at a time and dip their beaks in the water and be certain they drink; this step is essential to survival. If you can set the waterer above the shaving on a one-inch high platform, it will help prevent them from filling with shaving and hopefully prevent them from drowning.
* It is a good practice to put a teaspoon of sugar in warm water when arriving in the mail, this rejuvenates them and allows them strength to eat and drink.
* Feed: Until chicks catch on, the best way to get them to eat is by scattering starter chick feed on a piece of paper towel. After about 2-3 days, add a feeder.
* Location: Keep feed and water on outskirts of heat lamp, ideally on opposite sides (with heat lamp in the middle) to keep water from feed.
* Sleep: Expect the chicks to sleep quite a lot during this first week.
* **BANTAMS:**
  + Keep Bantam chicks in a separated area until they are strong enough to hang with standard size chicks. They need an area where they have free accessibility to food and water. They cannot compete with the larger breeds for food and water. They need an area snuggly and warm with no drafts. They do not have the ability to regulate their body temperatures and drafts could be a death sentence.

**Week 2: Baby Steps**

* Temperature: Bring down brooder temperature 5 degrees to 85 degrees.
* Water: Check waterer(s) at least twice a day and refill. Clean regularly.
* Feed: Keep feed free of moisture and chick poop. Using a piece of plywood or extra floor tile, raise waterer and feeder for less waste and mess.
* Feathers: You'll begin to see small feathers replacing the fluff on your chicks' wings and tail.
* Bedding: About 1-2 inches deep; clean brooder before doing so.
* Grit: Introduce a small amount of fine "chick" grit to chicks' diet -- needed to assist in digestion (which they would normally get if raised naturally outside).
* Perch: Consider adding a small, chick-sized perch in brooder for "roosting 101" -- made easily with three small branches in an H-shape.
* Socializing: If your chicks are going to be more than simply production birds, now is the time to acclimate the chicks to you.

**Week 3: Keeping a Lid On**

* Temperature: Bring down brooder temperature 5 degrees to 80 degrees by raising heat lamp about 3 inches.
* Lid: Now's the time when you should start putting a lid on your brooder.
* Waterer and Feeder: Consider raising the height again, placing them on a 2x6 -- and possibly switching to adult units to make it easier on your maintenance.
* Brooder: If you started with a small brooder, it may be time to upgrade to a larger one to accommodate your chicks' growth.
* Feathers: Lots more feathers are appearing and replacing the fluff.

**Week 4: Life beyond the Brooder**

* Temperature: Bring down brooder temperature 5 degrees to 80 degrees by raising heat lamp another 3 inches.
* Field trip: Depending on the season (assuming late spring/early summer), now is the time to introduce the chicks to the pen in small doses about 1 to 3 hours daily with supervision.

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**Week 5: Tweens**

* Temperature: Depending on the season, the heat lamp is done, as long as the temperature **does not dip below 60s at night**.
* Feathers: The chicks should look less like babies and more like miniature chickens, as adult feathers grow out.

For more in depth chick care go to eggwellfarm.com/article

**“Caring-for-New-Chicks”**

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